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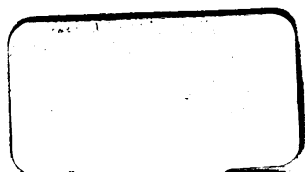
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★ R. R. Bowker

# CORDELIA

AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
N. B. RIPLEY

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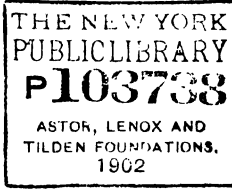
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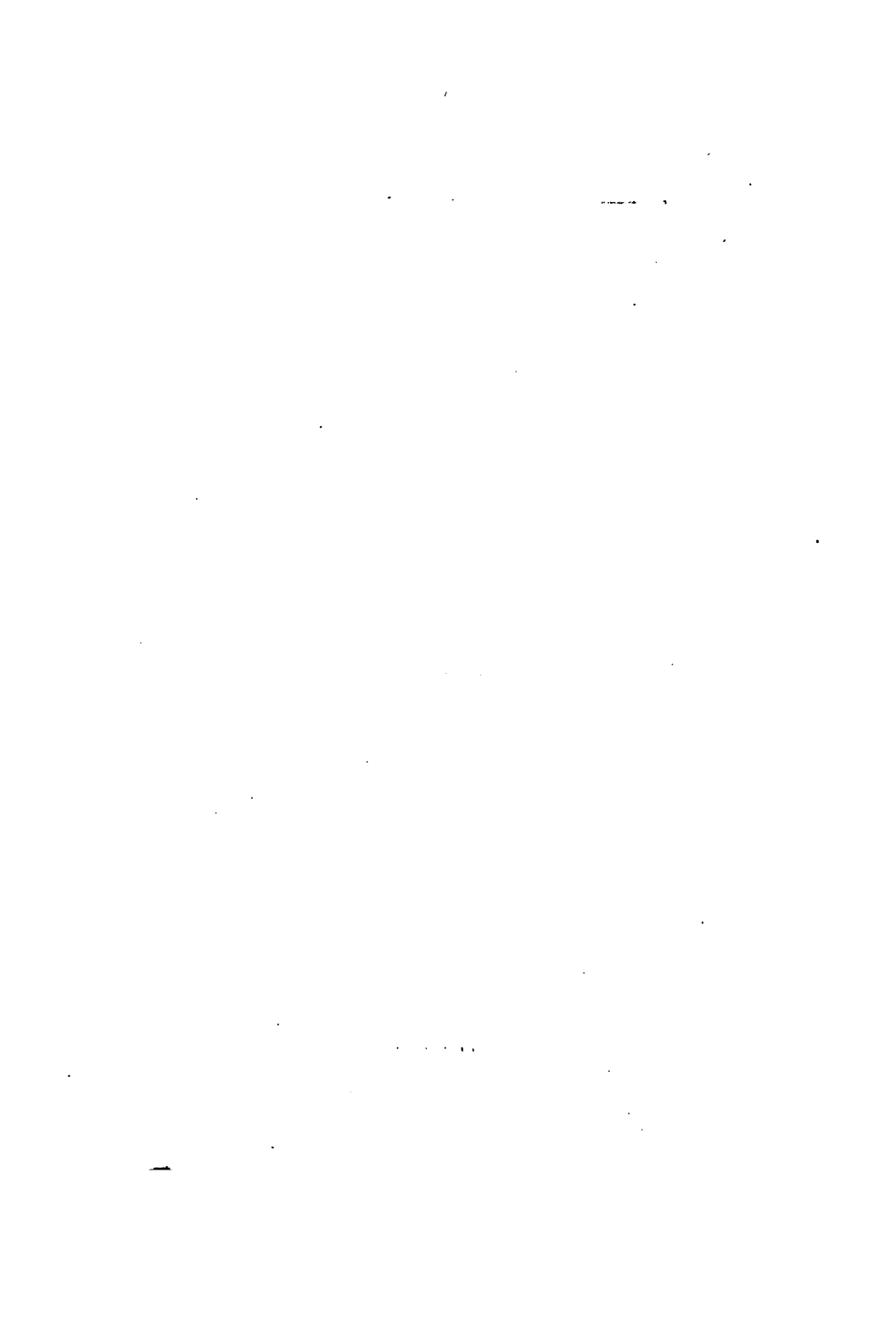
634  
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**TO  
HIS MOTHER**

**THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED BY  
THE AUTHOR**



NOTE.—Of the following poems, "The Legend of the Dipper," and the sonnet, "The Happy," have previously appeared in *The Christian Advocate*; the sonnets, "June" and "Lake George," in *Everywhere*; "The Empty Nest," "March," "Old Age," in the *Northern Christian Advocate*, and two or three others in the local press. The author takes pleasure in hereby acknowledging the courtesy which allows him to republish them here.



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# CORDELIA

## AND OTHER POEMS

---

### **Cordelia**

#### A HISTORY.

Still stands the beautiful village embosomed in  
hills and meadows;  
Down through the valley beside it bickers the  
stream toward the ocean;  
All o'er the crests of the mountains the woods  
lift their branches skyward,  
And stately monarchs grand of the forest stand,  
like sentinels old,  
Watching with vigilant eye the fields and the  
people beneath them.

Still on a clear summer evening the sun, in the  
western heavens,  
Spreads out glorious banners resplendent with  
amber and crimson;

## **Cordelia**

And bright in the soft twilight, as swallows wing  
flight to the home-nest,  
Hesperus, radiant queen of the star-world, shines  
for a little,  
Then sinks, with the close of the day, to the far  
land of the sunset.

Just where the hills with verdure and beauty  
slope back toward the westward,  
Stood there in days of the Past, with speed and  
precision receding,  
A cottage painted in red, and housing within it  
a widow  
Whose husband died while he bravely fought for  
the flag of his country.  
She was a woman famed 'mong her neighbors  
for virtue and courage,  
Like her whom the wise man describes and calls  
the virtuous woman.  
Childhood as others know it she knew not.  
Wearied oft were her hands,  
And her heart, though the heart of a child, was  
ne'er free from life's burdens.

Not long ago, in the afternoon of a summer  
and rest-day,  
Sought I the place where she played in the hours  
of her burdened childhood.

## Cordelia

Still stood the tow'ring hemlocks, with branches  
    outspreading, majestic,  
'Neath which, in the few moments she snatched  
    from the stress of her labor,  
Passed she her happiest times in a round of  
    innocent pleasure.  
Just a short distance away, on its hinges, rusty  
    and creaking,  
Hung the old gate which often had swung to  
    the touch of her fingers.  
Near it the open porch at the door of the cottage,  
    where, erstwhile,  
In service for others, her ready feet resounded  
    in passing!

Thoughtful and sad, I stood 'mid the scenes  
    so familiar around me;  
Up in the ancient hemlocks and maples whispered  
    the summer winds—  
Sighed with the same gentle sound she heard  
    in the days of her childhood;  
Round me the teeming fields stretched their  
    acres of glebe and of meadow;  
Borne to my senses came the same odors of field  
    and of forest;  
Above the same sky, and the same sun flooding  
    light o'er the landscape.

## Cordelia

Strange to live in the midst of so much they  
have wrought who have left us!  
Strange to walk o'er the sod that has bent to  
the press of their footsteps—  
Footsteps that never, never again shall resound  
o'er our portal—  
And say, while half of our life lies buried, "This  
spot they frequented!"

Quite early in life she was led in love to the  
nuptial altar,  
Then came to her heart joys of love, home, and  
hopes of maternity.  
Only a few years had passed happily over the  
household  
When over the homes of the country rolled the  
ominous war-cloud.  
Came the fond father home from the heat of his  
labor—  
He was the village smithy, and worked by the  
glow of the forge-fire—  
Came in most anxious mood, with looks on the  
faces and forms of his dear ones.  
Kissing fondly his wife, "Cordelia, my own," he  
said, while his heart spake,  
"Imperiled the country is, and sorely in need of  
defenders.

## **Cordelia**

I hear in this time of distress her call, and haste  
to obey it;  
If in the battle I fall, God will care for you and  
the children."

Hot fell her tears, but a nobler heart never  
throbbed in a bosom;  
Loved she her dear ones well, but her suffering  
country as dearly;  
Out of her loyal heart spake she strongly, with  
voice patriotic:  
"Go at the call in this hour when are needed the  
strong, the stalwart.  
If in the conflict you fall, and life here must go  
on without you,  
The Lord who keeps watch o'er us all will care  
for me and the children!"

Into the hot-breathed battle he went with the  
living and dying;  
Proved he a soldier good in the roar of the  
strife, fierce and deadly;  
Fought he as brave man and true, the cause of  
his country defending;  
Shirked he in service neither in camp nor the  
toil of the marches;

## Cordelia

Zealous was he in the fight for the health and  
life of the Union,  
Yet earnestly longed for the end of the war and  
struggle of battle.  
Out on the ensanguined field, his comrades fast  
falling around him,  
He went, and Death passed him by, nor missile  
nor blade ever harmed him;  
His not to die in the awful roar and the  
slaughter of carnage,  
His a death in the horror and stench of the  
poisonous prison;  
An end even worse than by gleaming sword or  
swift-flying bullet.

Meanwhile the cottage where, gently, the hills  
sloped back to the westward  
Shrouded and saddened was with a gloom that  
was dreadful, unlifted.  
Children four there were when the war-billows  
raged in the Southland—  
One died ere the husband departed, and was  
sleeping the last sleep—  
And at the hearthstone sat the ghosts of Disease  
and of Poverty.  
Now sat the defenseless woman down at the  
couch of her children,

## Cordelia

Saw one, in pain, move out of this world toward  
the shores of the other,  
Then followed its cold form to the grave in the  
quiet, old churchyard,  
And watched from her casement, while soft  
moonbeams streamed over the landscape,  
The spot where, in earth's embrace, her loved  
ones were peacefully sleeping!

Mem'ry recalls a time long after the date of  
this chronicle  
When I came suddenly on her kneeling in sadness and silence  
Before her stained war-letters, in her presence  
all those mementoes  
So dear to a heart that has suffered and yet  
buried its sorrows.  
Held in caressing hands were two tiny pink  
slippers of satin,  
And while down her cheeks the coursing tears  
were her anguish expressing,  
With lips which could scarcely speak, so deep  
the emotions which stirred her,  
She said to me, 'mid her sobbing, "These were  
the shoes of my darling!"  
I knew full well where the feet were, motionless  
now, that had worn them;

## Cordelia

Many a time in the quiet, long afternoon of a  
Sabbath,  
Pensively holding my hand, and walking as one  
does in sadness,  
She led me to gaze on the spot, under the shade  
of the maples,  
Where her darlings, with folded hands, beneath  
the grasses, were sleeping;  
'And I linked in my thoughts that scene of the  
two satin pink slippers  
With the sorrows which hung like a pall over  
her spirit patient,  
In that day when, under the flag, her husband  
fought 'gainst the rebel.

There have been heroes bold who fought on  
the field fearful and bloodstained,  
Holding it honor enough though they fell un-  
known in the carnage;  
Unsung their names, ungraved, save on the  
hearts of those who have loved them;  
Reckon always among them, as equally true and  
heroic,  
Women who bade them go forth, and sat by the  
gloom of the hearthstone,  
Bearing alone the burdens of life and of death-  
separation.

## **Cordelia**

Up to the lonely red cottage where sloped the  
hills to the westward—  
Up from the camp in the South, where soldiers  
were kept for the battle—  
Came the news to the mother, already near  
crushed with her burdens,  
That captured the husband was, and now lay in  
a Southern prison!  
Oh, the long hours and days of the patient and  
terrible vigil!  
The long hours of the nights spent in prayer to  
the Heavenly Father!  
Oh, the waiting, despondent, for news from the  
starving sufferer!  
Oh, how the bright rays flooded the sky of her  
hope for a moment,  
All too soon to be clouded forever in deepness  
of darkness!

Came there at last by some comrades of his  
who had been in prison,  
Who by fortune most good had secured the sweet  
boon of freedom,  
News of his death and that of a messmate and  
fellow in torture  
While they closely lay, well-nigh each in the  
embrace of the other!

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## Cordelia

Labored she early and late at tasks that were  
heavy and menial,  
That kept might the children be all under the  
sheltering home roof—  
That home might be home, a place of safety and  
rest to her loved ones!

Out of penury she, denying herself all but  
essentials,  
Managed to bring into the home those things  
desired by the boy life,  
Proud was she of her boys, and remarked in  
days following after—  
Though she could not have said it because of  
her own experience—  
“I would prefer three boys to a family of one,  
a maiden.”

Most sunny and warm the home was, though  
it was one of the humblest;  
She who had suffered so much, and had told her  
grief to the Saviour,  
Drove back the falling tears as her thought traced  
the days of her sorrow,  
Out of the conflict rose with the calm of a queen  
and a victor,  
And lived with a smile on her face, all for the  
sake of her children!

## Cordelia

Again let me think of that cottage where hills  
sloped to the westward ;  
Home's not the gilded hall, nor the palace with  
splendid appointments,  
Home is the place where love waits to welcome  
and care for its tenants.  
Home in that humble cottage! My eyes see it  
still in my dreaming!  
One little room was our kitchen, sitting-room,  
dining-room, parlor,  
And o'er it another will live in my memory for-  
ever!  
In it an old-fashioned bed, with coverlets warm  
and in plenty,  
And sleeping upon it betimes in the wild nights  
of the winter,  
Looking up through the roof to the stars that  
shone clear in the heavens,  
In morning brushing away the snow which had  
blown through the shingles,  
Were two boys who lived and loved in the joy  
of their happy boyhood!

Glad were the summers with riotous sports in  
the field and woodland!  
Happy the gladsome hours that were spent with  
the youths and the maidens ;

## Cordelia

Happy the hours we beguiled in the rigorous  
winter season,  
Skating the frozen pond, or in coasting with  
crowds down the hillside!  
Comes the scene to me now as I sit in the midst  
of my dreaming.  
Follow I now in my thought a light which gleams  
out in the darkness,  
I come to the cottage door, and pause ere the  
latch is uplifted,  
Listening am I, with heart and soul, to a voice  
that is singing—  
'Tis the voice of my grandmother—this of her  
singing the burden,  
"Nearing am I the heavenly ranks of the holy  
and kindred;  
Brush I the dews on the banks of the Jordan;  
near is the crossing!"  
Open the door I push, and at table is seated my  
mother,  
Busied with labor still, though the lamps of the  
evening are lighted;  
Lifts she at once her head, and with a saddened  
smile bids me welcome!  
I awake from my dream, so sad that only a  
dream it should be!

## Cordelia

Silent beneath the sod to-day are the dead lips  
of the singer!

Silent beneath the sod are the fingers that once  
were so busy!

Pious Cordelia was, and very careful that all  
of her children  
Reared should be in the practice and faith of  
the Christian religion;  
Always faithful was she in attendance at hours  
when the worship  
Was observed in the little old church of which  
she was a member.  
Thither she led her sons, teaching them by ex-  
ample and precept  
How they, 'mid the world's trials and follies,  
should follow the Saviour.  
Neither neglected she to look after the mind's  
careful training—  
She was a lover of books, and of learning well  
knew the value;  
Kept she by toil of her hands her sons in the  
school of the village.  
Prize I that training highly, the training of school  
and of chapel,  
Training that looked to the health of the mind  
and fruits of religion.

## Cordelia

Thus, as the years, one by one, with speed that  
was swift and unerring,  
Glided into the past, and of them remained but  
a memory,  
Ripened the children from boys to the years and  
stature of manhood;  
The widow, with memories of yore which were  
sweetest and saddest,  
Had over the pathway of time arrived at the  
years of the matron.  
Lives in my mind and my heart this woman, well-  
famed for her virtue;  
Not of the shapeliest form, nor of dress in the  
mode or fashion;  
Showed she her toil, her plainness the result of  
her poverty.  
Yet was she splendid, having the carriage and  
grace of a lady,  
A personality expressive of much that was  
beautiful—  
Eyes that were brown, with a look in them of  
tenderness infinite;  
Lips that were firm, and round them depres-  
sion of lingering sadness;  
Plentiful hair that was brown, and combed  
smoothly over her forehead,

## Cordelia

After a fashion, though old, which suited her  
face to perfection.  
Such, as I look through the Past, was Cordelia,  
queen among mothers!

But, with the burdens and sorrows stern life  
had laid on her shoulders,  
Came there at last a most painful breaking of  
heart and of courage;  
And down sat Cordelia to gaze trustingly out o'er  
the pathway  
So many had trodden before her—to the great  
faith of her soul  
The way, sharply defined, as she saw it, to glory  
immortal!  
Sorrows and difficult burdens she raised for the  
sake of others,  
With the tension strong which had been long on  
her heart-strings,  
Brought her the final summons which called her  
across the dark river.  
Yet complaint was there none, only a waiting  
trustful and patient;  
Paused she and rested awhile ere she bowed to  
this summons final,  
Thinking with joy and pride on the works which  
her hands had accomplished,

## Cordelia

Till in the glow of the sunset stood she at edge  
of the crossing,  
Sank in a pang of her suff'ring into unconscious-  
ness blissful,  
Quitted this earth with its shadows to be with  
Jesus and loved ones!

Never shall be forgotten the day I last looked  
on her features.  
Urging my way o'er the hills from a town a few  
miles in distance  
Came I at last to the old home from which  
life's duties had thrust me.  
Stopped was the throb of her heart a few hours  
before my arrival;  
Silent she lay, with the stillness and myst'ry of  
death around her;  
Sleeping she seemed to be, on the face an ex-  
pression most life-like,  
As though she had lain down to rest, to waken  
refreshed from slumber,  
With the light of a smile; and I could not resist  
the impression  
That, in passing from pain in this world to the  
bliss of the other,  
The welcome glad from friends thrilled her soul  
with a joy so ecstatic,

## Cordelia

The radiant smile on the sleeping features, so  
peaceful and happy,  
Was the reflected brightness that burst on her  
glorified spirit!

Stood we and wept out our sorrow, the three  
bereft of her presence,  
Yet we thought, 'mid our tears, of the gladness  
she found in reunions;  
Up in the Father's house, in the country eternal  
and glorious,  
Doubtless her soul found again the loves it had  
lost and had yearned for;  
Joined the chorus angelic, for which she had  
made preparation;  
Found there the land of the young, where wast-  
ing disease never enters;  
Bathed her freed spirit in light from the throne  
of God and the Saviour;  
Shouted o'er victories won in the path of life,  
rough and thorny;  
Thankful for all the burdens so heavy and well-  
nigh o'erwhelming,  
That by them at least she reached the home that  
is changeless, immortal.  
Resting there she abides, and the heavenly fruits  
make her youthful;

## Cordelia

Resting there she abides in the dwellings that  
front on the river!

There I shall see her, though I know not now the  
time of the meeting;

But when my sun is setting, my feet touch the  
brink of the crossing,

Gladly, I know, will her voice sound with some-  
thing like the old home-call;

And I shall see her with Jesus, her face will  
speak out its welcome.

With hand clasped in hand, triumphant we'll pass  
through the shining portal,

At home evermore in the blest place of the  
Saviour's preparing!

Sadly followed we her remains out to the quiet  
old churchyard,

Where the two little ones sleep, and where is the  
shade of the maples,

Buried her form from sight and left her alone  
with the centuries,

While o'er her bosom shall grow the grasses or  
whistle the storm-wind.

Still stands the beautiful village embosomed in  
hills and meadows;

Down through the valley beside it bickers the  
stream toward the ocean;

## **Cordelia**

'All o'er the crests of the mountains the woods  
    lift their branches skyward,  
And stately monarchs grand of the forest stand,  
    like sentinels old,  
Watching with vigilant eye the fields and the  
    people beneath them.

Still on a clear summer evening the sun, in the  
    western heavens,  
Spreads out glorious banners resplendent with  
    amber and crimson;  
'And bright in the soft twilight, as swallows wing  
    flight to the home-nest,  
Hesperus, radiant queen of the star-world, shines  
    for a little,  
Then sinks, with the close of the day, to the far  
    land of the sunset.

## **The Consecration**

### **A LEGEND OF OUR COLONIAL PERIOD**

Where the Wissahickon rolls its torrents onward  
to the sea,  
Dwelt there once among some mystics one who  
hailed from Germany;  
Scorning wealth and noble title, he had crossed  
the water-way,  
That he might instruct his children, and have  
time to think and pray.

'Twas an era of oppression in this New World  
o'er the wave;  
Cries from those in cruel bondage rose to God  
that He would save,  
Till a voice had come which told them that, as  
e'en God's Son had died  
To redeem a sad world fallen, they should never  
be denied.

Far around the snow was trackless, and the grim  
old forest trees  
Swayed and groaned, while icy crystals swarmed  
in air like summer bees,

## Cordelia

When one night, the old man waited with his  
    children at his knee,  
Full of faith for the fulfillment of a spoken  
    prophecy;

For prediction had been uttered how upon this  
    very night,  
At the third hour of the morning, God unto the  
    watching sight  
Would reveal a strong Deliv'rer; so they silent  
    vigil kept,  
Till across the storm-strewn threshold a stately  
    stranger stepped.

Tall was he, with form majestic, and upon his  
    manly face  
Noble calm, while all his bearing spoke of dignity  
    and grace.  
"Friends," he said, in salutation, "give me in-  
    formation, pray;  
Having lost it, you will tell me whither I can  
    find my way?"

Then the waiting, watching mystic did a kind of  
    rapture feel—  
" 'Tis not so; you have but found it. At this  
    holy altar kneel

## **The Consecration**

For the oil of consecration ; unto you is mission  
given  
Great as ever was man's portion from the gracious  
hand of Heaven.

"Deem this not the idle fancy of an overtaxèd  
brain ;  
Listen : for your country's future anxious, court-  
ing sleep in vain,  
Forth you rode into the night-time, conscience  
ever questioning,  
Is it lawful for the subject to draw sword against  
his king?

"And the beast by you unguided, wandered on,  
you cared not where,  
Till he brought you here in safety to the shelter  
of my care.  
Ask me not how know I these things. Has not  
God His will made known,  
How to this down-trodden people shall deliver-  
ance be shown?"

Deeply moved by such behavior, the traveler  
bowed his head  
To receive the holy ointment. "Promise me,"  
the good man said,

## Cordelia

"That when strikes the hour of justice—o'er the  
land war's clouds portend,  
Then your sword shall leap its scabbard, and  
your country's cause defend.

"Promise when you see your soldiers suffering  
for fire and bread;  
Or if once a grateful people, by your arm to  
vict'ry led,  
Should bow down to you in homage, pledge me  
to remember still,  
To bring forth a nation's freedom, you but work  
the great God's will.

"In His name who hears the needy when they  
cry unto His throne,  
I now give you consecration; fear not, look to  
Him alone,  
And as you are leal and honest, never doubt but  
God will be  
Your protector in the conflict, and will give you  
victory.

"Let no crown be on your forehead; but the  
wreath your brow shall wear  
Be the blessings and the honors a free people  
garland there.

## The Consecration

Take my hand, and hear me swear it by the God  
    who lends me breath,  
That to you, and to this country I will faithful  
    be till death!"

Then his daughter placed a chaplet of the laurel  
    she had wrought,  
Like those worn by Grecian victors, by their  
    deeds of prowess bought;  
While the son, who stood in waiting, now with  
    sword in hand drew nigh,  
And, as fell the benediction, girt it on the stran-  
    ger's thigh.

Stepped he thence unto the altar where the Word  
    was open laid—  
On its page a hand he rested, to his lips he  
    pressed the blade;  
Then a vow those firm lips parted, as he raised  
    his noble head,  
(While his eye with lustre lighted: "I will keep  
    the faith," he said!

Morning dawned, and from his shelter went the  
    wand'rer forth again,  
Giving naught of name or station; but there  
    came a time when men

## Cordelia

Saw Columbia's acres lighted by the flames of  
tyranny,  
And they sought for one who bravely should  
forever set them free.

Then appeared for their redemption one whose  
consecration vow  
Made him victor in the conflict; and his fellows  
count him now  
First 'mid warfare's gallant captains, first the  
country's heart who won—  
We enshrine his name forever, the immortal  
Washington!

## A Summer Reverie

To-day I walk beside the stream  
Where youthful fancies had their dream,  
A glorious summer beauty fills  
The spreading fields and rising hills.

I muse in reminiscent mood;  
In years ago two boys once stood  
Where swayed the alder's bending bough  
Precisely as I see it now.

The older one the younger led,  
With many a whispered caution said,  
"I will reveal—you'll not give out—  
Where lurk the biggest, lustiest trout;

"I 'spied them but the other day,  
When I was fishing up this way,  
And we shall bag, lest I mistake,  
Of this fine school, a handsome take.

"Now, you step softly—don't come near—  
To trust you here at all I fear—  
O'er stream upon this log I'll lie,  
And try my hand for largest fry."

## Cordelia

I see him now, with warning look,  
Put down his nicely fitted hook,  
The while I wait, 'mid stillness round,  
For him to bring the trout to ground.

I hear it now, as in a dream—  
Beneath the log the boiling stream—  
And the defeated angler's shout,  
*"Confound it all! I've lost the trout!"*

"It's all because you came too near!  
Now, what I say I bid you hear:  
When next a-fishing I shall go,  
The time and place *you* shall not know!"

O, shades of happy fishermen,  
Who lingered there before and then,  
O, tell us why, as Burns hath taught,  
The best-laid plans oft come to naught?

Our schemes on many an ill-fraught day  
Bring nothing but most dire dismay;  
We look for Fortune's fav'ring smile,  
But Disappointment waits the while!

## A Summer Reverie

Why is it, when in life we fail,  
We send forth nothing but a wail?  
And, Adam-like, look round for one  
To lay the blame of failure on?

Better to rise, assert the will,  
Seeking the use of higher skill,  
And every work with care begun,  
Toil bravely on till fame is won.

Thus muse I, while the brook still flows;  
The urgent Present rudely throws  
Its veil to hide the Past, which teems  
With mem'ries, and so end my dreams.

This is the blessing I would ask:  
The strength to do my daily task;  
Such beauty all my life may fill  
As floods to-day o'er field and hill.

## **The Agricultural Fair**

'Tis in the ripening autumn days,  
    Resplendent, crisp September—  
    The time the crowds remember—  
When far and near through the country-side  
Is heard the clatter of those who ride  
    In the early morning weather—  
    In the cool and bracing weather.  
They rattle along o'er the dusty way,  
Dressed each in his holiday array,  
The noise of wheels and their laughter gay,  
    Gladdens the fresh'ning air.  
'Tis now they go to the annual show—  
    The agricultural fair.

A curious crowd is this to me,  
    Who are met together here—  
    Some have not met for a year:  
Here is John, with his very best girl—  
The finest chance to give her a whirl  
    Up behind his bay that can pace—  
    How he beats them all at the pace!  
And his Betsey makes him glad to-day,  
Saying the word he wants her to say,

## The Agricultural Fair

Giving her heart to him for alway,  
They are a happy pair!  
'Tis thus things go at the annual show—  
The agricultural fair!

And the farmer's stalwart form we see  
Amid the throng and babble.  
He enjoys the noisy rabble;  
His quiet life in the stretching fields  
No great amount of excitement yields;  
This crowd is a breath from the world—  
The rushing and hurrying world.  
And with him sleek kine, or well-trained steer,  
"The best you will see," says he, "this year;  
Always manage to bring something here;  
The judges treat me square,  
That's why I go to this annual show—  
This agricultural fair."

But come with me to the floral hall,  
The place where the women gather,  
Their realm and glory, rather.  
"An apron like that red calico,  
I had when I went to school, I know,"  
Says one of a patch-work quilt—  
Of the old "log-cabin" quilt.  
"Mrs. Samuel Thompson, I'd think,

## Cordelia

Wouldn't bring that old quilt made of pink—  
You could tell it anywhere in a wink;  
It always hangs right there!"  
They're often so at the annual show—  
The agricultural fair.

Round this corner the seller of whips  
Is shouting like creation!  
He whips to beat the nation;  
While yonder, in full "exhibition,"  
Himself in the best of "condition,"  
Stands forth the medicine vender—  
With buncombe the nostrum vender,  
Most wonderful cures beyond all doubt,  
From corn on the toe to troublesome gout,  
For slightest pay shall be brought about;  
He takes the shekels there.  
How little we know at this annual show—  
The agricultural fair.

But horses, of animals the king,  
Honored in song and story,  
Are here in all their glory.  
How they arch their necks and sniff the air,  
From coldest of blood to proudest pair,  
All doing their best to excel—  
The drivers each hope to excel.

## The Agricultural Fair

Nobly one steps in his trappings gay,  
As though to the gazing crowd he'd say,  
"I'd have you know that this is *my* day;"

He takes the premium there.

You'll see it so at the annual show—

The agricultural fair.

The racers are here, with flying speed,

They flame with the conq'ror's fire,

They pant with a high desire

Now, while the onlooking people wait,

With giant endurance, swinging gait,

To make all the race-course thunder—

An exciting kind of thunder.

Wild are men when the races begin,

Wilder yet if a favorite win,

While those who lose much valuable "tin"

A dubious face must wear.

'Tis often so at the annual show—

The agricultural fair.

The day is done and homeward they go

In cool and crisp September—

The time they'll e'er remember;

And far and near through the country-side,

Is heard the chatter of those who ride

Toward home in the evening weather—

In the cool and bracing weather.

## **Cordelia**

They chase along o'er the dusty way—  
'Tis a sorry time for best array!  
But noise of wheels and their laughter gay  
    Float on the twilight air.  
And thus they go from the annual show—  
    The agricultural fair.

## **The Legend of the Dipper**

Once in a country far away—  
So runs the legendary lore—  
A suff'ring people cried in pain,  
By reason of their thirsting sore.

The rivers and the springs were dry,  
Dead were the flowers and the grass;  
The birds were hoarse, and could not sing,  
And all the heavens above were brass.

The land was sad and sorrowful,  
Gaunt Famine stalked the country wide,  
Full many in the stricken homes  
From cruel, parching thirst had died.

One night, with dipper in her hand,  
Out underneath the watching skies,  
Went forth a maid to find, perchance,  
Where springs of water had their rise.

She came into a silent wood,  
And kneeling there beneath a tree  
Prayed earnestly to God for help—  
That He would her condition see.

## Cordelia

The burden of her plea was rain ;  
If not on all the shower might fall,  
Would not the good Lord send enough  
To simply fill her dipper small ?

So long the prayer, o'er drowsy eyes  
The god of sleep his mantle threw ;  
Lo, when she woke the cup was filled  
With water fresh as morning dew !

Ne'er paused the maiden in her joy  
To moisten her own parched lips first ;  
Remembered she her mother dear,  
Dying in agonies of thirst.

So toward her home she ran with haste,  
Nor on her mission lagged or stopped ;  
But, woeful case, she, stumbling, fell,  
And from her hand the dipper dropped !

While prone upon the ground she lay,  
Well-nigh too faint to rise again,  
She felt the grass beside her move,  
And from it came a cry of pain.

A fainting dog was lying there,  
And dying from the scorching sun,  
The cup she raised ; she thought to give  
A drop e'en to this thirsty one.

## The Legend of the Dipper

O, blessed sight! O, glad surprise!  
The dipper so divinely filled  
Had still been kept by unseen Hand,  
So that the water had not spilled.

Now as she poured within her hand  
Some water for the brute's sad need,  
At once there came a blessing grand  
Which quite repaid her for the deed;

For, lo! the dipper by her held,  
The water clear and cool within,  
Was changed, by wondrous miracle,  
To silver pure from one of tin!

Homeward the journey then she made;  
To other hands the treasure gave,  
Which in her heart she hoped would be  
The means her mother's life to save.

The matron saw the liquid cool—  
She looked with longing, glazing eye;  
But, with a noble sacrifice,  
She turned away, prepared to die.

"I cannot take from one so young  
What shall to her of value be;  
You long may live; I soon must die;  
What matter a few days to me?"

## Cordelia

Thus to the daughter spoke the dame,  
And passed the dipper from her hand;  
Lo, as it passed, a change was wrought;  
The chalice was a golden band!

As now the servant thought to pass  
To each the water to them sent  
There stood a stranger at the door,  
With saddened looks and figure bent.

The lines of sorrow on his brow,  
The depth of sadness in his face,  
His urgent need and vestments poor,  
Appealed to all within the place.

With grateful heart he raised his eyes  
When to his hand the dipper came;  
"Blessed is he," he said, "who gives  
A cup of water in His name."

Then all about him splendors shone,  
A radiance of dazzling light;  
The golden goblet which he held  
Was set with seven diamonds bright.

But joy! it suddenly became  
A gushing fountain, pure and sweet;  
Flowing throughout the thirsty land,  
A boon for all the suff'ring meet.

## **The Legend of the Dipper**

Then through the night, from gladdened earth,  
Up where the stars so brilliant shine,  
The seven jewels took their way,  
Sparkling with beauty most divine!

There, from a golden chalice pure,  
The starry dipper in the skies  
Is set to tell to all who see  
The blessing of self-sacrifice.

## **The Land of the Young**

"And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man."—St. Mark xvi. 5.

Within the Holy Book I turned and read  
The story how the women sought the Dead,  
But found where He had lain  
An angel visitant arrayed in white.  
Around Him shimmered aureoles of light  
Like that which later flooded all the skies  
When exiled John, with gaze-enraptured eyes,  
Looked o'er the heav'nly plain.

Eternal youth sat on his brow, for he  
Was from a land where age can never be;  
His glad evangel fell on mortal ear:  
"The Christ is risen; lo, He is not here!"

But as the sacred lore  
I conned, if I might learn what lesson still  
From this first Easter should my bosom thrill,  
Fresh as the morn appears when night is done,  
To my rapt soul there came a precious one  
I had not seen before!

Now for my heart these words new meaning hold;  
Though one by one my life's swift years be told,  
And backward hurled as leaves on tempests flung,  
I'll find them in the country of the young.

## **The Absent**

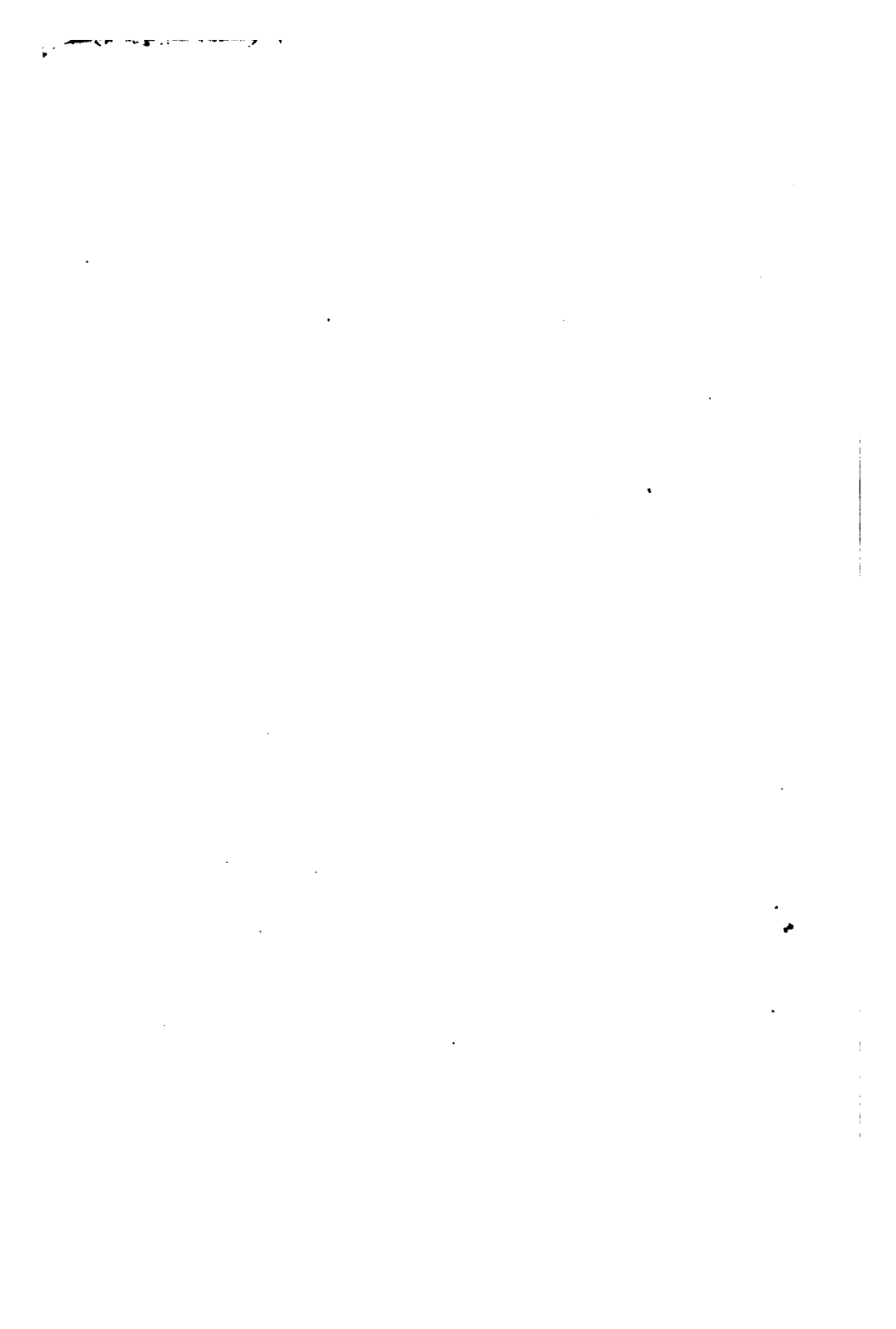
Here on this grassy slope we sat us down  
As only truest comrades ever may,  
Watching the winding river thrid its way  
Through mottled meadows, past the sleepy town.

Arm clasped in arm, 'mid fields we wandered  
slow,

Our converse ran with easy flow, and free,  
And life was at its full, sweet flood with me—  
'Twas yesterday, and yet so long ago!



# SONNETS



## **The Reformer**

His feet are on the heights where heroes stand,  
And, Argus-eyed, his vision scans the years;  
He sees the burdened ones with sweat and  
tears,

For them his voice is heard throughout the land;  
Lo, while he boldly speaks, on every hand

Opposing power its brazen front uprears,  
E'en where he hoped for sympathy, appears

A blinded host to check his project grand!

Yet from the summit thunders he his word,

A warning cry to turn the falling rod—

That men may yet dispel the hov'ring gloom;

But when for human rights they stand unstirred,

'Tis then is heard the angered tones of God,

And the Almighty strikes the hour of doom!

## **The Empty Nest**

I came one day across an empty nest;  
The wild November winds, with solemn sigh,  
Intoned their mournful measures to the sky;  
Gone was the brood which once had found its  
rest  
And safe retreat beneath the mother's breast;  
Gone was the smile of June, and, far on high,  
The leaden, wind-borne rack went flying by,  
While Nature in her slumber-robe was dressed.  
So loves and hopes must wither and decay,  
The light and joy and song of home depart.  
And missing be the forms we erst have pressed;  
No life but knows its chill, November day,  
Nor in this world was ever there a heart  
That did not hold in grief its empty nest!

## March

The wild and noisy March his war-cry rings  
And sets his storm-cloud banner in the sky;  
The sun in veiled splendor moves on high;  
The wind from out the frozen Northland sings  
In diapason full; the warrior flings

All o'er the slumb'ring land, with shriek and  
sigh,

The snowy emblems of his empery,  
And takes his ermined throne with pomp like  
kings.

Yet well I know his reign cannot be long,

For 'mid his loudest notes I still can hear

The south wind stir, while growing daffodils  
Their spathes uplift, and through it all the song

That tells my glad'ning heart the Spring is  
near,

And soon the summer time shall crown the  
hills!

## June

Oh, June, thou splendid month of roses red,  
That burden all the air with odors sweet,  
I lift my joyful eyes again to greet  
Thy sapphire skies which vault me overhead;  
I hear through all the year thy coming tread,  
As march the moving days with hurried feet,  
And often wish the flying time more fleet,  
That thou may'st to thy rosy throne be led.  
Yet, though I prize thy scented, songful hours,  
Thy precious dew amid the twilight still,  
I love thee more for time long gone, I ween,  
When, 'mong her cool and fragrance-laden  
bowers,  
Waiting with joy my longing heart to fill,  
I won the rarest woman for my queen!

## **The Happy**

I count him happy in this world of care,  
Where pain and sorrow are the common lot,  
And oft obscuring clouds arise to blot  
With shadows what would be a prospect fair,  
Who, though the rue be his, and he must fare  
The way alone, by helpers all forgot,  
Meekly looks up, and, trusting, murmurs not,  
But keeps his course, and finds a blessing there.  
He dwells from jarring elements apart,  
Where angels of contentment guard him  
round;  
A peace seraphic fills with joy the heart,  
The pathway which he treads is holy ground;  
He lives a conqueror o'er sordid things,  
And upward mounts as if on eagles' wings!

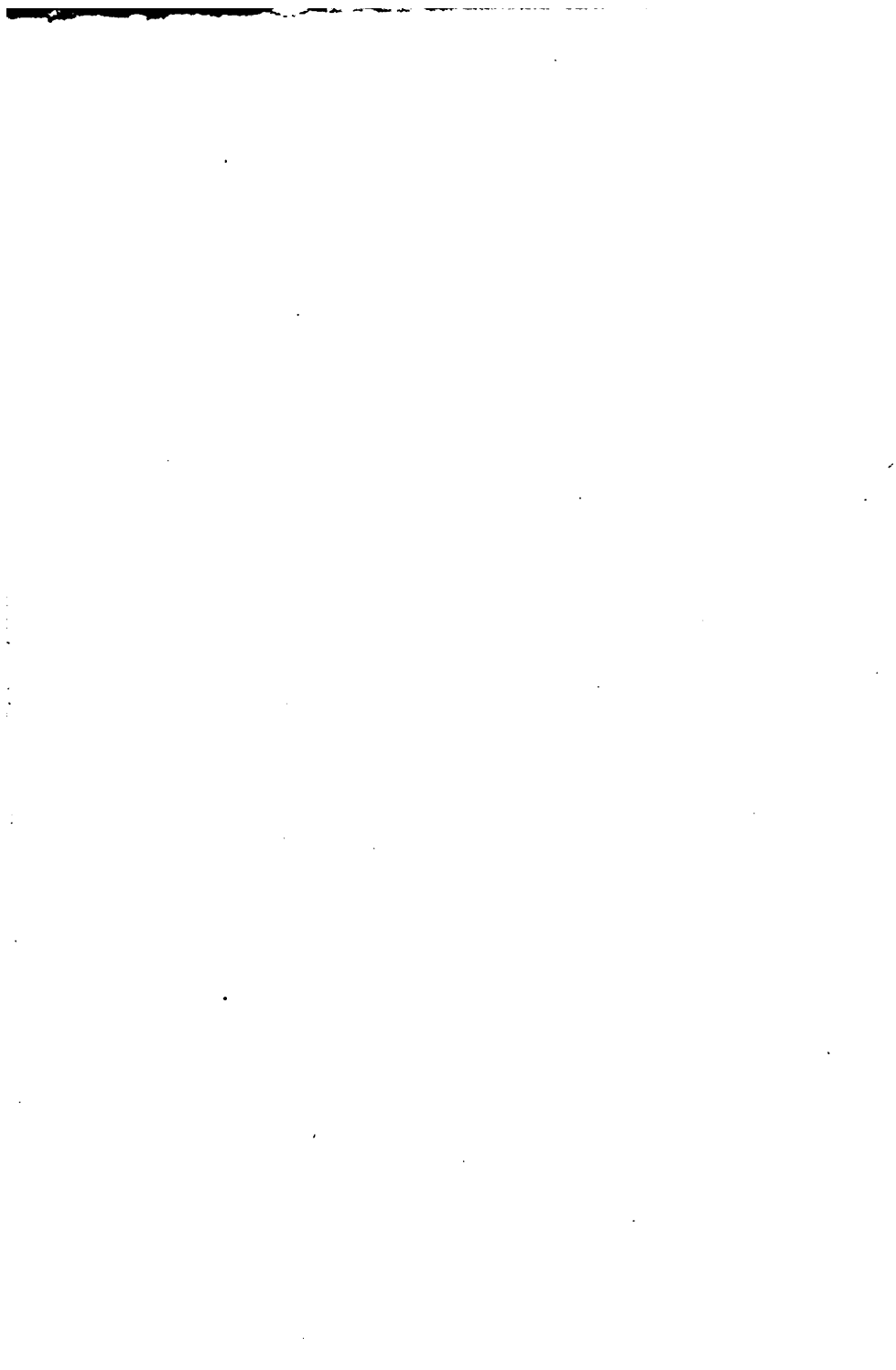
## Lake George

How beautiful thy placid bosom lies  
In the embrace of verdant, cloud-crowned hills;  
Thy softened, healthful mountain breeze distills  
Sweet balm for him who to thy quiet flies;  
Scene upon scene, each with the other vies,  
As here this fairy land my vision fills,  
To lift, in peace, the heart of him who wills  
Toward better things above the arching skies.  
Dull must he be of heart, and eye, and ear,  
Who fails to learn the lessons thou dost teach,  
And does not note the grandeur of the place;  
Feels not, in silent awe, a Presence near,  
Nor hears, in everything around, His speech  
Who sets His kiss upon thy sunlit face.

## Old Age

"Old age is dark and unlovely."—OSSIAN.

'Tis true if all the precious time is spent  
Amid the stress and fret of anxious care  
For things that perish ere we are aware;  
If all our energies are ever bent  
On worldly power or pelf; not one intent  
That by the lips in word, or song, or prayer,  
We help some soul his heavy burden bear,  
Nor deem ourselves on holy missions sent.  
Yet have I seen age beautiful and calm,  
The day's work done, the happy soul at rest,  
Its ear turned even then to catch the psalm  
Down-ringing from the mansions of the blest;  
So in my heart I hold this blessed truth;  
Old age may but begin eternal youth.



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